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is, it contains many parts, and each of these subordinate parts being necessary to the whole, if they are not all acted upon, confusion and difficulty must be the consequence.

Gentlemen, I cannot dismiss the subject, without presenting to our countrymen my most sincere congratulations, that there is a prospect of a system of National Education being established. What a glorious day for Ireland will that be, which shall give birth to such an institution. It will confer immortal honour on the government which shall establish it, and the most substantial benefits will accrue from it to the people at large. This is the means by which to make loyal subjects, and peaceable citizens; to secure the affections, engage the lasting gratitude of the country, and render penal statutes for ever unnecessary.

That the bright sun of education may speedily shed its refulgent beams upon our too long neglected country, and dispel the dark mists of ignorance, superstition, and intolerance, from our land, is the sincere wish of, Gentlemen,

Your obedient servant,

DION.

Belfast.

For the *Belfast Monthly Magazine*.

IN a late number of the Critical Review, the following extract is given from Mrs. Semple's "Thoughts on Education:" "Parents in pleasing their daughters at school, should consider their own circumstances as connected with their future happiness, and that of their children: they distress themselves to give them an expensive education, and what are the consequences? These children acquire habits of refinement at school, which make them esteem the house and the company of their pa-

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rents unfit for them, which render domestic duties a burden they are unable to bear, which place them in a rank they were not destined to hold. On the other hand, parents have the mortification, after all the privations they have suffered, and the expense they have put themselves to, to discover that they are objects of contempt to their children, that their children are miserable in themselves; and these reflections are accompanied with the bitter conviction, acquired too late, that their own folly has produced such evils to both."

On this passage, the reviewer remarks, "what a melancholy truth is this! If any one doubt it, let them look to the present system of *dash and show*, which is the order of the day. Let them look for wives and mothers, enlightened economists and provident managers, amongst the fine wet-drapery-figures of the daughters of our butchers and bakers, our green-grocers and linen-draperies, and a thousand others. Only let them take a peep into the houses of our farmers; not one in county or district, but throughout the land. Instead of check aprons in the dairy, we shall see Grecian robes; close caps are thrown aside for hair *en papillotes*, comfortable hose and black shoes, for silk stockings and nankeen half-boots."

"It is not, nor it cannot come to good."

Examples are not wanting in our country, I very much fear to prove the truth of Mrs. Semple's observations with regard to the errors of parents in thus educating their daughters, and there are also great evils attending a part of this melancholy system. If girls in this station really make any proficiency in the accomplishments which they are taught, the fond parents are anxious to display their children's acquirements;

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parties are made at home to show what their daughters can do, and if a family of higher rank in their neighbourhood, supposing they live in the country, condescend to notice a young girl just returned from school, in the circumstances I have mentioned, her mother is filled with delightful dreams of the advantages her daughter may derive from such society; and should they be pleased to have an humble companion to amuse themselves and their inmates, and extend their civilities even to request the young female to live some time in their house, then, what "gay delusions rise" in the bosoms of both mother and daughter.

I will suppose a single instance. Lavinia returns from school to her parents house, who in the middle rank of life have denied themselves many real comforts to give her a showy education. She dances, sings, and plays on the piano forte, is lively and pretty: thus accomplished, she forms a part of the furniture or equipage of M—— house, where there is a constant influx and reflux of company. The lady of the mansion, Mrs. H——, having no interest in domestic economy, amuses herself with all the round of idle nothings, which I will venture to enumerate; in the mornings driving out to visit her neighbours, or to buy, or to return things already purchased at the provincial town, or to races, or to a red review of military, or a black review of clergy; if the day is wet, playing chess, or picquet, reading the last new novels, or if she is an aspirant, lounging over some fashionable poem. This lady, whose evenings are counterparts of her mornings, finds in Lavinia the trifle she so long wanted, one who will go of a message, officiate at her tea-table, take her cards, and then attend her summons to the piano forte, where she warbles

forth notes innumerable, from Italian bravura's to Moore's Melodies, from those which are all sound, to those which are all sense, (or nonsense as some would call them.) Lavinia's auditors are generally in affected rapture at the astonishing powers of her voice, and as the male part of the company is usually composed of militia and other officers from the adjacent towns, and such loose obtruders on civil society, they must of course be conscientious and consummate judges of her taste and execution. Thus the poor girl, after displaying her various efforts in music, &c., retires for the night, fondly believing all the kind and tender praises she has heard from her admirers, and she passes a sleepless night in forming schemes of a noble alliance.

In the morning, Lavinia rises late, but quite time enough to attend a breakfast, seldom over till noon. Another day succeeds of varied idleness and trifling dissipation, and thus the routine of idleness is continued from day to day through the whole year.

I happened to spend a few days at M—— house in company with Lavinia, and on my return home, called to see her mother whom I found rationally employed, instructing some of her younger children, preparatory to their attending school, and as we are intimate, she conversed with me on her domestic affairs. "I seldom," said she, "go out, except to my garden, I have no time for visiting; the care of my household, instructing my children as far as I am able, and working for them, employs me most fully;" "and most usefully," added I; "and why do you not keep Lavinia at home to assist you? Having been so many years at school, she must be a competent teacher to her little sisters, and her attention to the ma-

pagement of your house, would certainly be a great relief to you, and prepare her to acquit herself with propriety when she becomes mistress of one, and the mother of a family; for God's sake why do you let her stay at M—— house? You are not one of those mothers who strain every nerve to show off their daughters, and get them quickly married.”—“No my dear friend,” answered Lavinia's mother, “but I wish my child to see a little more of the world before she settles at home, or in her own house.” “And is the world,” I replied, “to be seen in a favourable view at M—— house, surely not. I know you will forgive me for attempting to advise you, but I have just seen Lavinia, seen the life she leads, a useless member of society. When she returns home to you, she will feel dissatisfied at your quiet retired habits; she will sigh for the interesting novel she was accustomed to read as she reclined on the sofa, or she will languish for the rattling nonsense of those idle officers, formerly of the Irish, but since we have been improved by the union, of the English militia, who were accustomed to pay their homage to her, the reigning beauty of M—— House. The healthful recreations of your little family will have no charms for her, her thoughts are on dress and parties; in short, her mind is filled with every frivolous fashionable fancy. Should she soon marry, will she conduct herself better, has the life she led fitted her to become the companion of a sensible man, whether she marry an opulent person, or one in her own rank of life, in which economy and industry must be her duty? If her husband has a taste for literature, and is disposed to converse with her on literary subjects, she cannot gratify his wishes, she has neglected to cultivate her

mind. Instead of fulfilling her duties cheerfully to her husband and her children, she will be constantly oppressed by that demon, *Ennui*, for having no resources in herself, and being always accustomed to such an idle waste of life, she will most probably repine at what she considers her hard fate, and be for life a slattern in her dress, negligent of her family, and morose in her temper.”

Lavinia's mother seemed struck with my observations: but whether she has followed my advice, and snatched her daughter in time from this destructive society, I have yet to learn. I have only to wish, that every mother who has a daughter in the same situation, would seriously reflect on the injury likely to result from permitting a young girl to be an adopted inmate in one of these idle country houses, which I trust are declining in number, and which will probably never be put down in this nation, till penitentiaries become general.

R,

To the Proprietors of the Belfast Magazine.

IN your last number you allude to the ancient practice of ploughing by horses' tails, and justly censure the obstinacy of retaining an old custom. Yet something may be said in mitigation of our ancestors, deduced from the following passage in Leland's History of Ireland, 4to edition, Vol. II. page 486.

“The old odious custom of ploughing by the tails of cattle, or using the short ploughs, as they were called, had been forbidden by an act of the state, under the penalty of ten shillings yearly on every such plough: their superiors were little attentive to teach the poor a better method; nor were the King's officers soli-